MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN NEW YORK CITY, JANUARY 8, 1942.

The eighth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1942 was held in the office of Shreve, Lamb and Harmon, 11 East 44th Street, New York City, on Thursday, January 8, 1942. The following members were present:

Mr. Clarke, Chairman,
Mr. Lamb,
Dr. Cret,
Mr. Holabird,
also H. P. Caemmerer,
Secretary and Administrative Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p. m.

In the absence of Mr. Clarke, Vice Chairman Lamb presided during the afternoon session.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: The Minutes of the Meeting held December 18, 1941, were approved.

2. PLANS FOR ALTERATION OF EAST TERRACE OF THE WHITE HOUSE: Mr. Lorenzo S. Winslow, architect for the National Park Service, presented, as he said at the request of the President, a set of plans for alteration of the east end of the east terrace of the White House (facing the Treasury Department Building) so as to provide an office building at that location comparable to the executive office building on the west side of the White House. Mr. Winslow said this project was considered five years ago when the Executive Office was remodeled by Mr. Gugler, who also made a sketch proposing the change in the East terrace. However, the matter was held in abeyance for adoption at some future time. Mr. Winslow said there is great need now for additional office space and the President wants the proposed office building built just as quickly as possible.

The facade of the present east terrace measures 32 x 85 feet. As enlarged it will measure 57 x 115 feet, extending somewhat eastward, which will do away with the fountain at the east entrance and add a second story, thus adding ten feet to the heighth of the east terrace. It is also proposed to provide garage space for three or four cars. The facilities for receiving visitors at the porte cochere are not to be materially changed. Mr. Winslow said it is proposed to use brownstone, which will be painted white.

The plans presented by Mr. Winslow were carefully inspected. Dr. Cret felt the appearance of the structure could be materially improved by omitting the columns and having instead a simple entrance. To illustrate this Dr. Cret drew a sketch and the suggestion was agreed to by Mr. Lamb and Mr. Holabird. After a general discussion of the project, Mr. Winslow was authorized to proceed with the foundation work in connection with a bomb shelter that is being built and also while the drawings for the superstructure are being made. Mr. Winslow said he would have a model made to illustrate the entire scheme. The Commission felt a consulting architect should be appointed to assist in this work. A report was sent to the Director of the National Park Service. (Exhibit A)

3. PAINTINGS FOR THE SOCIAL SECURITY BUILDING: Under date of January 7, 1942, the following letter was received from Mr. Edward B. Rowan, Assistant Chief of the Section of Fine Arts:

Dear Mr. Clarke:

This will introduce Mr. and Mrs. Fred Farr who have been invited, on the basis of competent designs submitted in the Social Security Competition, to undertake the decoration of the Recreation Room, Social Security Building.

Mr. and Mrs. Farr have prepared a scale model of the Recreation room indicating the proposed mural treatment and general color scheme

and I have asked them to present this at the meeting of The Commission for comment and advice. It will be appreciated if the general treatment of the room, from an architectural standpoint, is commented on.

It is understood from a telephone conversation with Mr. Caemmerer that the Commission will offer no objection to this office then sending either the model or photographs of the model to Mr. Poor for his further comment. Such an arrangement will, no doubt, expedite the final acceptance of the designs and will be greatly appreciated by both the artist and the members of this office.

Trusting that the Commission has a successful meeting and with warm personal regards, I am

Cordially yours,
(Signed) Ed Rowan
Edward B. Rowan
Assistant Chief
Section of Fine Arts.

Mr. Farr was present and explained his sketch model (one-half inch to the foot) illustrating his proposed paintings for the recreation room of the Social Security Building. The room is 97 feet long by about 30 feet wide. Mr. Farr said the furniture is quite a bright red and green and therefore he thought it necessary to step up the color scheme of the paintings. These illustrated a variety of recreational activities on land and sea. The figures were about life size.

The architect members of the Commission were well pleased with the scheme and approved it subject to any comments Mr. Poor might wish to make. The Commission suggested that Mr. Farr paint his pictures on the wall first and then select an appropriate color for the dado; also he should break the line of passage between yellow and red background near the entrance doors. A report was sent to Mr. Rowan. (Exhibit B)

4. TIDAL BASIN BRIDGE ALONG INDEPENDENCE AVENUE: Dr. Gret submitted sketches A, B, C, D, and D-1 for a proposed bridge to cross the north end of

the Tidal Basin along Independence Avenue. Dr. Cret also submitted a memorandum on the subject of these sketches, as follows:

January 8, 1942.

MEMORANDUM ON PRELIMINARY STUDIES FOR EXTENSION OF INDEPENDENCE AVENUE

The advice of the Commission of Fine Arts is sought at this preliminary stage before final studies are presented for approval, for the following reasons:

The architect, in studies A and B, attempted to carry out the spirit of the suggestion of Mr. Hubbard, Consultant to the Park & Planning Commission, who recommended carrying the branch of Independence Ave. over the Tidal Basin on a causeway connected to the shore by 2 bridges. A causeway having been found impracticable by the engineers in charge of the project, studies A and B are an attempt to give the appearance of a causeway to a structure of bridge type. The bays of the central portion are walled-in to look like a retaining wall; however, in the engineers' opinion this type of structure is more expensive to build than an ordinary bridge type, and is open to the criticism of being subject to deterioration because of dampness inside the enclosed units. The construction would also be much slower, and speed is an important factor.

Scheme C is an intermediate solution.

Scheme D is favored by the engineers because of speed of construction, economy and ease of maintenance.

The Commission's advice is requested on the merit of these various schemes, and suggestions for improvement are desired.

General scheme for the treatment of the Tidal Basin - Although the architect's advice has been asked mainly for the bridge and overpass adjoining it

(to be submitted later when survey data is available), and the road layout determined by the District authorities, the relation of the bridge and basin was considered.

The plan submitted herewith shows the required fill of Tidal Basin almost compensated by the excavated portions, without the need of further cuts elsewhere. The north branch of Independence Ave. would be placed directly against the Basin wall (at level plus-minus 10); planting space is provided along the 2 semi-circular portions with a lower basin wall (continuing the height of present wall).

The Paul Jones monument does not need to be moved although its surroundings may require some changes when the new roads are built.

PAUL P. CRET

The sketches were inspected by Mr. Lamb and Mr. Holabird. They agreed that a bridge would be much more preferable to a causeway. The bridge will be 720 feet long and on the axis of the John Paul Jones Monument. The Commission expressed a preference for Scheme D-1.

Dr. Cret was asked which design he liked best and he said that personally he liked the bridge with open railing because it will block the view less and give an appearance of lightness. Dr. Cret also submitted a general scheme for the bridge in relation to the Tidal Basin and this was generally approved. It was thought desirable to give further study to the abutments. Dr. Cret said he wished this submission to be considered an informal one, and this was agreed to.

5. DESIGN FOR FIRST AID AND COMFORT STATION: The secretary presented a set of plans received from the National Park Service proposing the construction of a first aid and comfort station on the west side of the Rock Creek Parkway

Underpass. Congress appropriated $20,000 for this in the Interior Department Appropriation Act for 1942. The National Park Service had reported through Mr. Donald L. Kline the need for this first aid and comfort station since many soldiers are now stationed in the vicinity of the Arlington Memorial Bridge and that it was also needed for the convenience of people who attend concerts which are held at the Water Gate during the summer. A report was sent to the National Park Service, approving the plans. (Exhibit C)

6. PLANS FOR TEMPORARY WAR BUILDINGS: Under date of December 30, 1941, the following letter was received from Mr. W. A. Noll, Acting Supervising Architect:

Dear Sir:

There are forwarded to you herewith two sets of prints of plans of proposed temporary Federal Office Building "C", to be constructed in the vicinity of 26th Street and Constitution Avenue, N. W.

The elevations of Unit No. 1 will be similar to the elevations of other temporary office buildings being erected in this city. The design of Unit No. 2 will be similar in character to that of Unit No. 1 with the same exterior finish, but in Unit No. 2 the elevations will be windowless; further, Unit No. 2 will be a three story and part four story building of mill construction. If desired a drawing showing the elevations of Unit No. 2 will be furnished the Commission when completed.

This office would appreciate receiving at the earliest possible date any comments which the Commission might desire to make in connection with these sketches.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) W. A. Noll,
Acting Supervising Architect.

The Commission noted that the plans were similar to previous designs for temporary office buildings and approved them. A report of approval was sent accordingly. (Exhibit D)

7. DESIGNS FOR APPROACHES IN CONNECTION WITH THE WAR DEPARTMENT BUILDING: Under date of December 26, 1941, a set of plans was received for additional bridges with letter as follows:

Dear Mr. Caemmerer:

Transmitted herewith are two prints of details for Bridge No. 11 to carry the CD road over the south entrance to the south parking area. No separate architectural elevation has been drawn because this bridge is the same as Bridge No. 7 as far as the facades are concerned.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Joseph Barnett,
Principal Highway Design Engineer.

The secretary reported that while Mr. Clarke was in Washington on December 29, he inspected the plans and approved them for the Commission. This was agreed to. (Exhibit E)

8. DESIGNS FOR ADDITIONAL BRIDGES FOR THE WAR DEPARTMENT: Under date of December 30, 1941, the following letter was received from Mr. Joseph Barnett for additional bridges for the War Department Building:

Dear Mr. Caemmerer:

Transmitted herewith is one print each of the preliminary architectural elevations for Bridge No. 9 to carry the War Department Building access over an access truck road, and for Bridge No. 10 to carry the Fort Belvoir bypass or Alternate U. S. 1 over the Heavy Duty Road. You will note that the architectural elevations for Bridge No. 9 are similar to Bridge No. 8 nearby which was submitted to you some time ago.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Joseph Barnett,
Principal Highway Design Engineer.

The designs were inspected and approved. (Exhibit F)

9. REPORTS BY SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON WHITE HOUSE FURNISHINGS: The secretary presented the following reports received from the Committee:

(a) Report disapproving the placing of the portrait of Rachel Jackson by Howard Chandler Christy in the White House. (Exhibit G)

(b) Report disapproving the installing of certain mantels in the White House. (Exhibit H)

The Commission took note of these reports.

10. EXHIBITION OF THE PLAN OF WASHINGTON: In accordance with a request received from the Architectural League of New York some months ago through Mr. Lorimer Rich, Vice President and Chairman of the Exhibition Committee of the League, the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission arranged for an exhibition of the Plan of Washington at the headquarters of the Architectural League of New York, 115 East 40th Street. An inspection of the exhibition was followed by a dinner in the evening, which was attended by Mr. Clarke, Mr. Lamb, Dr. Cret, Mr. Holabird, and the Secretary. In all, there were about 150 present, among them many well known artists of the country. Among former members of the Commission present were Mr. Borie, Mr. Manship and Mr. Wm. Adams Delano, who likewise represented the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Also Mr. William T. Partridge was present to represent that Commission. The President of the American Institute of Architects, Mr. Harold Shreve, was also present.

After the dinner, Mr. F. J. Woodbridge, President, expressed the appreciation of the Architectural League to both Commissions for having arranged this exhibition, particularly since it commemorates the 150th anniversary of the preparation of the L'Enfant Plan, following the adoption of the Residence Act of July 16, 1790, providing for a Federal District on the banks of the Potomac, which Act was adopted by Congress while the United States Capital was in New York City. Mr. Woodbridge recounted the historical fact that it was one of the great issues of Congress at that time and told how an agreement was reached between Hamilton and Jefferson at a dinner held in Maiden Lane, that resulted in adoption of the Act creating a Federal District on the banks of the Potomac.

Mr. Delano spoke of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and its work since 1926 and the efforts made to plan for the metropolitan areas of Washington. He also spoke of its varied duties in relation to the acquisition of park and playground areas, zoning problems and the like.

Mr. Clarke was then called upon for a speech. He spoke of the circumstances which led to the establishment of the Commission of Fine Arts in 1910 as set forth in a letter from Elihu Root to Mr. Moore on the occasion of the 25th anniversary dinner in 1935. Mr. Clarke emphasized the distinction between a planning Commission and a fine arts commission and called attention to the cordial cooperation that exists between the two commissions in the work relating to the National Capital.

Also Mr. Clarke explained the Shipstead-Luce Act under which the Commission is given a limited control over private building in the District of Columbia; he said it is one of the unique laws of the country, has been successfully administered since 1930.

Mr. Clarke then related some of the problems that have confronted the Commission in previous years. He spoke of difficulties encountered in connection with the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, the arguments relating to selection of marble or limestone for the proposed Federal Reserve Annex; he told of the recommendations of the Commission pertaining to the large painting, "The Signing of the Constitution" and of the recent controversy over the Rachel Jackson portrait.

Special recognition was given to Mr. Partridge who helped Mr. McKim in preparation of plans authorized by the Senate McMillan Commission which revived the L'Enfant Plan in 1901. Also a telegram of appreciation was sent to Mr. Moore, who served as Secretary of that Commission and who subsequently

became one of the original members of the Commission of Fine Arts in 1910 and served as a member for 27 years, including 22 years as Chairman, and devoted the best years of his life without remuneration to helping bring about the beautiful capital city that we have today.

After Mr. Clarke completed his remarks several guests spoke briefly in expressing their appreciation of the Plan of Washington as represented by the exhibition. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 p. m.

C O P Y

WFL:MH
CC: Commission file
Mrs. Harold I. Pratt

January 9, 1942

Dear Mr. Drury:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting held in New York on January 8, considered the design submitted by Mr. Lorenzo S. Winslow for the new East Wing of the White House. The Commission approved the sketches as submitted, with certain minor changes to the ends of the porte-cochere and to the north and south elevations. The Commission feel that a successful solution has been achieved.

They would very strongly recommend to you that, owing to the great importance of this structure, a thoroughly competent architect be employed to consult with you on the details, both exterior and interior, in order that we may be assured that the character and spirit of the design will harmonize with the White House.

Attached hereto is copy of a telegram which was sent to you this morning.

Very truly yours,

Gilmore D. Clarke
Chairman

Mr. Newton B. Drury, Director
National Park Service
Interior Department
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A

WESTERN UNION

WR 152 73 DL 2 Extra NRP New York NY 9 120 1P 1942 Jan 9

Newton B. Drury Director National Park Service
South Interior Bldg.

Commission Fine Arts at meeting yesterday reviewed preliminary plans proposed new east entrance Executive Mansion Stop While plans generally satisfactory Commission requests employment of competent consulting architect Stop Important to have details most carefully developed Stop Commission recalls successful work of Eric Gugler New York Architect on west wing Stop He or other architect equally competent should be appointed Stop Commission glad to suggest other names if you desire Stop Letter follows.

Commission of Fine Arts by Gilmore D. Clarke,
Chairman.

C O P Y

C O P Y

January 12, 1942.

Dear Mr. Rowan:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting in New York City on January 8, 1942, had before them your letter of January 7, concerning the designs by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Farr for the decorations in the recreation room in the Social Security Building and conferred with Mr. Farr concerning the matter. Mr. Farr presented a scale model of his work, which was considered by the Commission.

The Commission were well pleased with the designs as indicated in the model and approved the scheme subject to any comments Mr. Varnum Poor, the painter member of the Commission, might wish to make.

It was suggested that Mr. Farr break the line of passage between yellow and red background near the entrance doors. Also the Commission wishes to lay emphasis on the suggestion that Mr. Farr paint his pictures on the wall first and then select an appropriate color for the dado.

It was understood that Mr. Farr would receive instructions with regard to sending the model to Mr. Poor, who at the present time is stationed temporarily at Carmel, California.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,
Chairman.

Mr. Edward B. Rowan,
Assistant Chief,
Section of Fine Arts,
Public Buildings Administration,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT B

C O P Y

January 12, 1942.

Dear Mr. Drury:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting today approved the designs submitted in your behalf by Mr. Donald L. Kline of your office for the first aid and comfort station to be built at the Water Gate abutment of the Rock Creek Parkway.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Mr. Newton B. Drury,
Director,
National Park Service,
Interior Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT C

C O P Y

January 8, 1942.

Dear Mr. Noll:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting in New York City today approved the design which you submitted with your letter of December 30 for Temporary Office Building "J" to be constructed in the vicinity of 26th Street and Constitution Avenue, N. W.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Mr. W. A. Noll,
Acting Supervising Architect,
Public Buildings Administration,
Federal Works Agency,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT D

C O P Y

December 30, 1941.

My dear Mr. Barnett:

Your letter of December 26, with its inclosure of prints showing details of Bridge No. 11, has been received. By direction of the Chairman, I have to report that the Commission of Fine Arts approve the design for Bridge No. 11 to carry the CD road over the south entrance to the south parking area. The Commission have noted that this bridge is the same as Bridge No. 7.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) H. P. Caemmerer,

Secretary.

Mr. Joseph Barnett,
Principal Highway Design Engineer,
Public Roads Administration,
Federal Works Agency,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT E

C O P Y

January 3, 1941.

Dear Mr. Barnett:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting in New York City today approved the design you submitted with your letter of December 30, for bridge No. 9 to carry the War Department Building access over an access truck road and for bridge No. 10 to carry the Fort Belvoir bypass or alternate U. S. No. 1 over the heavy duty road.

It has been noted that the design for bridge No. 9 is similar to that for bridge No. 8, which was approved by this Commission some time ago.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke,

Chairman.

Mr. Joseph Barnett,
Principal Highway Design Engineer,
Public Roads Administration,
Federal Works Agency,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT F

C O P Y

As a member of the Sub-Committee of the Fine Arts Commission upon proposed Furnishings of the White House, it seems illogical to us to consider the acquisition of an imaginary portrait of Rachel Jackson for display in the White House. This opinion is not based upon the merits of the portrait as a work of art but upon the fact that the portrait is not contemporaneous and that Rachel Jackson, the wife of Andrew Jackson, died before his inauguration to the Presidency, and therefore did not occupy the White House.

Signed:

Mrs. Harold I. Pratt
Chairman

Mrs. Harry H. Benkard (Sg) Bertha Benkard

Mr. William A. Delano (Sg) Wm. Adams Delano

Mr. David E. Finley (Sg) David E. Finley

Mr. Luke Vincent Lockwood (Sg) Luke Vincent Lockwood

EXHIBIT G

C O P Y

As a member of the Sub-Committee of the Fine Arts Commission upon proposed Furnishings of the White House, I have seen a photograph of the Mid-Nineteenth Century mantel which is about to be removed from the house, 200 Eighth Street, South West, and cannot recommend its acquisition for the White House.

Signed:

Mrs. Harold I. Pratt
Chairman

Mrs. Harry H. Benkard (Sg) Bertha Benkard

Mr. William A. Delano (Sg) Wm. Adams Delano

Mr. David E. Finley (Sg) David E. Finley

Mr. Luke Vincent Lockwood (Sg) Luke Vincent Lockwood

EXHIBIT H